

the opportunity to go to the opening session of the Florida legislature. I heard the House Speaker talk about the deficit in the State of Florida, some 4 billion plus dollars that they have to be able to fill the gap, because they are not like those of us that are here that can be able to take out a high interest credit card and say, let's put it on that card, whatever it costs. We will worry about it later, but we just need to do it now whatever we feel like doing.

In the States, they actually have to balance. Constitutionally, they have to balance their budget. So that means something has to be taken from someone else to fill that gap. And so when you start filling that gap, I want to make sure that everyone in America understands that you are talking about cutting assistance to seniors, you are talking about higher tuition rates in colleges. Even though we cut student loan rates here on the Federal end as relates to interest rates, they are going to end up seeing higher tuition because they have got to make ends meet. You are going to end up seeing many of our youth programs cut. You are going to end up seeing many assistance for small businesses at the State level cut. They are going to have to find that \$4 billion in Florida from somewhere.

So I think it is very, very important, we started looking at this whole issue of Iraq and accountability and all of the things that we talk about here on the floor. You have got to think about how these decisions trickle down to local government. When you start looking at the Bush tax cuts for those that are the connected and the wealthy, we start looking at that as devolution of taxation. We've cut your taxes up here in Washington, blah, blah, blah. You look at the previous Republican Congress, oh, this is what we've done. Apparently the American people caught on to it and that's why the Democrats are in the majority now. It's devolution of taxation.

What does devolution of taxation mean? It means once you cut something here, you're going to have to balance in the local government area. So the State government has to cut what it gives to local governments and school boards and parishes. And then, when it gets to the local government, they're going to have to make cuts to be able to fill the gaps, the obligation that the State is not making.

So when you look at those gaps being filled, I can guarantee you that many of my constituents and many of us who know what it means to punch in and punch out and have a 15-minute break in the morning and a solid half-hour for lunch and if you get a 15-minute break in the afternoon. But those individuals that know what that means, then they know that they're going to end up getting the short end of the stick, or the messy end of the stick as we may say down in Florida.

I think it is important that people understand what is happening here and

what is not happening here. What is not happening here is that the President is not moving in a responsible way to get us out of Iraq. There is great debate as it relates to the Presidential candidates. The picture that I showed you of a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who stood with the President and said that they will not allow him to be overridden and there they are there standing in the picture, are standing in the schoolhouse door as it relates to the kind of reform that should be happening.

What is happening here, to give you a report on that, is that there is a great attempt to be able to try to bring ourselves back into fiscal control as it relates to the budget and start working on knocking down this deficit. We are paying more on the debt service than we pay on Homeland Security. That is a problem. If the debt service is in competition with what we invest in education, that is a problem.

So when you look at these issues and you look at 2010 and the sunset of these Bush tax cuts, when you look at what first responders are not getting, 100 percent cut as relates to the COPS program, community-oriented policing program that many law enforcement officials called for and endorse 110 percent; when you look at these issues and you say that there is no money, when you have crumbling bridges here in the U.S. and you have bridges that are being built in Iraq by U.S. contractors and Middle Eastern contractors, you can't help but question who is doing the right thing and who is doing the wrong thing. Because, I am going to tell you right now, it is not happening. In all of the Congressional districts that you look around, I don't see any Congressional district saying, Oh, we're happy with what we have. We don't need anything else. We don't care about infrastructure and making and creating U.S. jobs. We don't care about investment and green collar jobs to where if we wanted to put sod on the top of the Capitol building, that won't be an overseas job. If someone dropped out of high school, they have an opportunity to take part in that. If someone went on to college, if someone went on to post-education and became an architect and they would have a part in that. Will it build our economy? Truck drivers will make money. You will have individuals in the agriculture field that will make money and will be able to stimulate our economy for real jobs. We would no longer have the discussion that took place in Ohio just last night as relates to the Presidential primary on who is shipping jobs overseas and who is creating jobs on land here in the United States.

So as we look at that, Mr. Speaker, I think that we should look at it from the standpoint that we have to win. The U.S. taxpayer must win. We are here to represent that individual. I didn't come to represent anybody else on another continent; I came here to represent, not only my constituents,

but by them voting for me to be here, Mr. Speaker, they federalized me to be able to deal with the issues of the United States of America and be a part of board of directors of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. We want that to continue to be the case.

What we don't want is what we are seeing, the downward spiral, irresponsible spending, and the cuts that the Bush White House has said that has to be made to be able to carry out a mission in Iraq that has no end in sight as far as they are concerned. I think that the American people will rise up once again in the upcoming election in saying that we are willing to put in the people who are going to put an end to this practice.

I beg my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please join us, those of us on the Democratic side that are trying to find a way to not only bring about accountability in Iraq, but bring our men and women home so that they can be reunited with their families; so that they can actually go to some of the programs that I go to of my kids. I get an opportunity to see them. I had an opportunity to have dinner with my family this afternoon earlier. I just want them to have that opportunity. I want the men and women that serve in uniform to have that opportunity. I want that State Department worker that has had to volunteer to go to Iraq to have that opportunity. I want that church or that synagogue or that mosque to be able to spend that spare time in trying to build families versus trying to comfort families of what is going on with their loved ones in harm's way. I want that kind of America that we are used to seeing.

Like I said earlier, it is no longer about the fire, it is about something else. And I think that it is important that the Members, their number one priority should be every day that they hit this floor is how they can reunite these families and to be able at the same time save the U.S. taxpayer money or their investment. If we can come to the floor and put \$70 billion like that, and that is without my vote, over into Iraq to continue what the President would like to see carried out in Iraq, then we should be able to do the same in stimulating our economy here domestically and making U.S. families stronger and making Americans stronger.

With that, Mr. Speaker, as usual, the 30-Something Working Group, we do want to hear from the Members. I want to make sure that the Members share information with us and staff share information with us. You can e-mail us at

the
30SomethingDems@mail.house.gov.
That is

30SomethingDems@mail.house.gov.
Also, we encourage the Members, and all of the charts that we have here are also on www.speaker.gov/30something.

I think it is also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that we look forward to the coming days as we start to tackle